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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the concept of teacher vision, showing how vision serves as a means for teachers to guide and measure their work. It discusses how teachers' passionate commitments do not divert them from their work but rather direct and shape their thinking and planning and their learning about their work. The paper also shows how vision, in the teaching context, may result in both positive and negative outcomes for teachers' emotions and learning. Information comes from a survey of 80 teachers from two teacher education programs and interviews with 16 teachers selected from the 80 who had relatively well-articulated visions. The first section describes the character of teacher vision, sharing three dimensions that help describe and analyze teacher vision. It also includes an example of one teacher's vision and shows how the dimensions can be used to characterize his vision. The second section explores the role vision plays in teachers' lives, offering a set of clusters or "constellations" of dimensions of vision associated with varying roles in teachers' lives and with a range of positive and negative emotional experiences. The final section discusses the implications of the conception of vision for teachers' learning and motivation. (Contains 21 references.) (SM)

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Visions of Delight, Visions of Doubt:
The relationship between emotion and cognition in teachers' vision

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Paper presented at the
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Introduction

For centuries, scholars in western culture have considered emotion and cognition as distinct and even unrelated processes (Damasio, 1994; LeDoux, 1996). Indeed, many believe that emotions are in some way opposed to or, in conflict with, rational thinking (Damasio, 1994). Thus, we have come to consider feelings as providing us with distractions or diversions, fulfillment or inspiration, pleasure and excitement, or even distress and anxiety—but we believe that emotions have little to do with thinking. When we feel deeply, it is suspected, such passions cloud, disrupt and waylay reason or, even prevent us from thinking altogether. Everyday phrases such as "acting irrational," "losing control," "mad with rage," "crazy in love" equate deep emotional feelings with loss of rationality and even with madness.

This separation between feeling and thinking is reflected in educational theory and research as well. In recent years, while scholars have paid significant attention to teachers' cognition, they have tended to overlook teachers' emotions (Hargreaves, in press). As Hargreaves has observed, "research and policy on leadership, educational change and teacher development ignores or minimizes the emotional significance of teachers' work." Similarly, Shulman (1999) has commented that while literature on teachers' knowledge has helped us understand a great deal about how teachers carry out their work it has had little to do with teachers' emotions. In fact, when teachers' emotions have been examined they have largely been considered an unfortunate consequence of certain activities or situations, such as feelings of depression and deflation resulting from attempting overly utopian reforms or the crushed idealism and discouragement felt by new teachers upon entering the profession (Veenman, 1984). Consistent with our everyday beliefs about the opposition of emotion and thinking, such research has generally treated emotion as disrupting, disturbing or otherwise preventing teachers from productive, effective practice (Gugliemi & Tatrow, 1998). However, some researchers have begun to explore the ways in which the emotions play a more central role in the nature of teachers' work (Hargreaves, in press; Hargreaves & Fullan, 1998; Little, 1996; Moffett & Hammerness, 1998; Noddings, 1992).

This paper builds upon these efforts by examining the concept of "teachers' vision." Vision provides a means to explore how emotion and cognition come together to shape teachers' learning and their decisions about their professional lives. In this paper, I will show how vision serves as a means for teachers to guide and measure their work. In so doing, I will show how teachers' passionate commitments do not divert them from their work, but in fact direct and shape their thinking and planning, even their learning about their work. I also show how vision, in relationship to a teachers' context, may result in both positive and negative outcomes for teachers' emotions as well as for their learning.

In the first section of this paper, I will briefly describe the character of teachers' vision, sharing three dimensions that help describe and analyze teachers' vision. I will also provide an example of one teacher's vision and show how the dimensions can be used to characterize his vision. In the next section, I will explore the role vision plays in teachers' lives, by presenting a set of clusters or "constellations" of dimensions of vision that are associated with varying roles in teachers' lives and with a range of emotional experiences—positive *and* negative. I will conclude with a discussion of the implications that the concept of vision may have for teachers' learning and for their motivation.

Data for this paper comes from a survey of eighty teachers from two different teacher education programs (one, a private post-baccalaureate program and the other, a public credentialling program) and interviews with sixteen teachers selected from the eighty who had relatively well-articulated visions.[1] The sixteen teachers were selected to represent a range of experience from student-teacher to veteran, as well as to represent four disciplines—English, history, mathematics and science. (A list of the sixteen participants, along with some background data is provided in Appendix A.) Classroom observations and reflective interviews with four of the sixteen teachers provided additional data for this study.

Looking at Vision

When I first began to study teachers' vision, many people expressed doubts about the questions I was pursuing and the value of vision. People questioned whether vision

was actually something different from beliefs or philosophy. Others warned that teachers' vision might certainly exist, but might not be particularly important; vision could play only a minor role in teachers' lives and work, secondary to more critical elements that shape their work such as their beliefs, knowledge, plans, students, subject matter, or context. Others were even more skeptical, as one person remarked, "I don't think teachers have vision."

However, the data show that indeed, teachers do have visions. The data revealed that teachers' visions are substantial and concrete, vivid and powerful, and stable and consistent over time. For most teachers, vision is far from fanciful and unrealistic, and, for some, it represents what Greene (1995) has described as a "consciousness of possibility" (p.23). Vision consists of images of what teachers hope could be or might be in their classrooms, their schools, their community, and in some cases even society as a whole. For these teachers, vision can provide a sense of "reach" that inspires and motivates them, and invites them to reflect upon their work. Yet visions don't always function in these beneficial ways. For other teachers, the reach seems too distant. The comparison of vision to current practice leads them to learn that their visions are impossible and that they and their students are powerless to reach them.

Although most visions are tangible, vivid, and stable, teachers' visions are by no means uniformly similar. In fact, they varied across three important dimensions that emerged from the data as well as from a review of literature on visual cognition and perception (Arnheim, 1969; Kosslyn, 1983; 1994; Messaris, 1994; Snyder, 1980). These dimensions are focus, range and distance (Hammerness, 1998). Focus refers to the center, or areas, of interest of the vision. What images, ideas, or aspects enjoy the bulk of concentration? When a teacher describes or envisions a vision, what areas are in focus? Range refers to the scope or extent of the focus. The field of vision may broad and panoramic or it may be more narrow and specific. For instance, some people may focus upon an area more narrow in scope such as an individual classroom or a particular group of students. Other people may describe a focus that has a broader range, perhaps spanning their school, or maybe even stretching to include a school system, an ethnic community, or even the nation. Distance refers to how close or how far vision is relative to what one is currently doing. Vision may be perceived as quite close to current practices, or it may

be extremely distant from daily experiences. Finally, while not an inherent dimension of vision, one cannot talk about vision and the role it plays in teachers' lives without talking about the context of vision. Therefore, what teachers perceive and describe as the relevant arenas of their vision serves as the context of vision.

Carlos, a student-teacher of history, helps us see how these three dimensions can be used to characterize and analyze vision, and gives us a closer look at one particular vision in context.

Carlos' Vision

Background and Context of Vision

Carlos is a first-year history teacher at a large high school in Northern California, Sandhill High School. He is also a graduate of Raleigh University undergraduate program as well as of their teacher education program. Sandhill High, however, has been part of his life much longer than Raleigh University. Carlos attended Sandhill himself as a high school student. Carlos explains that this context provides an important means of understanding his vision:

> ...I guess I'll have to start from the past in order to explain my vision, but the school that I'm student teaching in now is actually the school that I went to, and it's the community that I grew up in. I basically grew up in the same community where a lot of my students are now (initial interview, line 9-10).

In fact, Carlos' goal has always been to teach in a community similar to his own. The opportunity to teach at Sandhill enabled him to do so:

> So I guess I'm coming full circle now and I like that. I guess the...whole notion of time being more circular in the Latino community than linear [attracts] me. It's not one thing and then the other and then you forget about the past. You are always thinking about the past and you are trying to hope for the future (initial interview, line 28-34).

Carlos chose to work at Sandhill even in the face of voiced concerns by his teacher education professors about such a choice. While Carlos sometimes wonders whether the Sandhill administration will support his vision in terms of reinforcing his high standards, Carlos believes strongly that his deep personal connection to Sandhill and its students

makes this was a place where he feels assured and confident that he can carry out his vision.

Carlos' Vision

Carlos' "hopes for the future" concern the Latino students in his classroom and school raising their expectations for themselves and their work, caring deeply about their schooling, and ultimately going on to higher education. The current poor performance of Latino students at Sandhill deeply concerns Carlos, and he reflects, "...I guess that my vision is to change that. To get the students at SHS to change their vision about what they want..." (initial, line 67-71).

A central image of Carlos' vision is of an equal number of Latino students and White students enjoying academic success. For instance, in the initial interview, he described envisioning Latino students posting just as many letters of college acceptance on the wall of the school as the White students did. He observes,

> if you look at proportions, if everything would be right, it would be fifty-fifty. You know, fifty percent of the White students would be up there and fifty percent of the Latino students would be up there and then that would be fine. But I don't see fifty-fifty (initial, line 77-78).

In his follow-up interview, he repeated this image of equitable representation; "I really felt that there wasn't enough representation of Latino students in the higher classes like the advanced standing. I just felt like [with] 50% Latino [in this school], you should have 50% in all classes" (line 6-7).

Academic success, Carlos imagines, will contribute to the gradual improvement of the economic and political status of the Latino/a population in the United States. Carlos believes strongly that few opportunities await those without a good education. He observes, "I've seen that education is the way that any community has improved in this country...just looking through history it's been through education. Rarely anything else gets a whole community out of poverty, out of the worst paying jobs" (initial, line 444-446).

In a written description of his vision, Carlos described his role as a teacher in this ideal classroom as both facilitator and motivator. On the one hand, he said, he envisioned himself tapping into students' innate curiosities and interests, helping them think about things they had not thought about before, and facilitating their learning. On the other hand, he imagined his role as fostering students' interest in continued learning. In addition, in his initial interview, Carlos described his hopes to "motivate the students at Sandhill to care about their schooling" (line 44). In this ideal classroom, Carlos' students are "learning to help others" (vision statement, line 26). Students are not simply working to better their own academic record, but they are also assisting one another (in turn helping their community as it is represented in their classroom). Carlos explains that he imagines students committed to a "higher purpose";

> In my ideal classroom…my students care about doing well because they have a higher purpose. They are no longer concerned about trivial things…but understand that they need to learn as much as they can because they are an important link in their family's chain (vision statement, line 27-31).

Carlos even used some of the same language and phrases when talking about his vision at different times. For instance, he repeated the notion of the "higher purpose" from his vision statement nearly a year later in the follow-up interview; "I mean I still have the higher purpose in mind…for my students" (follow-up, line 256). He talked in the initial interview about hoping students would "care to a point where they're going to become active in the school and ask what classes they're taking and if those classes are going to get them to college" (initial, line 86). In the follow-up interview, he said he ideally envisioned students as "more active in their education" (line 128).

Over and over again, in his vision statement and interviews, Carlos spoke of his concern for the lowered expectations for and poor academic performances by Latino students and his own hopes and dreams of raising them. In fact, Carlos explained that he was not only clear about his vision to himself, but that he shared his vision with his students consistently. He explained, "that's explicit to my students. They know…my purpose of coming back and teaching is because I want to help the community. They all know this. It's one of the first things I tell them" (initial, line 334-337).

Classroom visits and post-observation reflective interviews further confirmed the content of his vision. For instance, two of the days I visited his ninth grade class were part of a unit Carlos had designed on college admissions. He spent several days helping students learn how to calculate their grade point averages, and talking to them about what ranges of scores would be acceptable to which programs of higher education (ranging from two-year programs, state universities to private universities). He spent nearly an entire class period talking about the types of courses (levels of math; years of English, science and history; language requirements for example) that the local and state universities required. He urged his students to review their schedules and to talk with him or their guidance counselors if they felt they needed assistance in designing an appropriately challenging course load that would meet their academic goals.

Focus. While Carlos envisions academic success for all his students, he emphasizes that his focus is upon the academic success of his Latino students. For instance, in the initial interview, he remarked,

> I mean I know that I always focus a lot on the Latinos, but whenever there's a student in my classroom I'll work my hardest to help them achieve no matter what. [T]hat's the way I see it for any student. But the reason I concentrate so much on Latinos is because I grew up in that neighborhood and that environment and at Sandhill High where I saw when I was in the AP courses I only saw myself and maybe 2 other Latinos....I still [don't] see ... enough Latinos in the AP courses (initial, line 72-75).

In fact, Carlos himself even uses the term "focus" and "concentrate" when talking about his attention to the academic success of Latino students.

This focus was evident in my classroom observations and his reflections as well as in his vision statement and interviews. For instance, after a class in which he asked his students to read a newspaper article on the increasing necessity of higher education (entitled "Today's diplomas don't mean much to employers") he explained, "today my goal ...for them was to try to understand that more and more just a high school education is not really enough" (post-observation #2, line 18-19). He described in depth his concerns about his particular students and their inability to appreciate the steps needed to eventually gain admission to college. When discussing his students, he immediately

began talking about his Latino students, describing Roberto, a young boy who he felt was quite bright but did not contribute enough effort to maintain good grades. "There are a lot of students like that, there's a lot of Latinos like that because they don't see the steps that are required to get to college. And I want to make the steps clear to them" (post-observation #2, line 167-168) Carlos explained. Carlos also said he selected curriculum that might motivate his Latino students; "I'm thinking of starting my world studies unit, starting with Latin America so I'll keep the interest of the Latinos in the class" (post-observation #2, line 232).

Range. In some senses, Carlos' vision is narrow because he focuses upon Latino/a students. However, it stretches broadly beyond the classroom to include his local/ethnic community, and spans to encompass the future of the Latino population in the United States. Carlos envisions his students not only avoiding the corps of drop-outs but graduating, attending college, and in his words, "becoming something." In fact, Carlos imagines many of his students becoming teachers themselves. He emphasizes, "I definitely, definitely see a lot of my students going on to college and becoming something. Something important and even some of them teachers" (initial, line 238-239). Carlos imagines his students returning to his neighborhood and school, highly motivated and well-educated, thus increasing the ranks of those committed to community improvement;

> [I hope]…to spark an interest in a lot of the students to come back as teachers. A lot more Latinos to come back as teachers. Basically people who care about that community and want to see the community I grew up in—they want to see it improve (initial, lines 69-71).

Indeed in every source, this breadth of range is consistent and is in striking contrast to other study participants whose visions focused solely upon their students and their classrooms. Carlos consistently talked about his dreams for his students' academic success, and the resulting improvement in his community. For instance, in his vision statement, Carlos talked about the fact that he envisioned his Latino students working for more than just grades and that he imagined in turn, the Latino community "gain[ing] more economic and political power" (line 47). In the initial interview, he also talked about the effects of his dreams for the success of Latino youth in relationship to his own

feelings of "wanting my community to come up economically" (initial, line 447). He noted, " to come up economically you need to come up in education and politically as well" (initial, line 447). In his follow-up interview, he also indicated the breadth of his range; "my goal, like I said, is college for [my students] and to help the community" (initial, line 257). Even in post-observation interviews, when Carlos talked about his vision, his comments indicated this broad range. For instance, he described himself as "always" thinking about his community. He noted, "I think I learned that … from other people that helped our community and even died for our community. And for me that's something so great that I would want…[all people] should be willing to help" (post-observation p.21).

Vision as Guide and Measure

For Carlos, as well as for most teachers in this study, vision serves as a guide and a measure. Vision can serve as a guide for practice, directing curriculum, units, even daily lessons. And vision can also function as a sort of "measuring stick" that can indicate how far current practice sits from where one wants to be. Another teacher in this study described this function as providing a "reference point to where you are" (Kelly, initial, line 212). Yet in this role of measuring stick and guide, vision can prompt extremely different feelings in teachers. For those who feel that the distance between their vision and practice is reasonable and navigable, evaluating practice in the light of vision invites feelings of motivation and fulfillment. Such teachers feel inspired to reflect upon past practice and to evaluate their strengths and weaknesses. In addition, those with a clear focus can use their visions to help them to plan for the future. They can use it as kind of model for which to strive, directing their learning as they seek new means to approach their visions. Carlos, for example, thinks of his vision "every day" and feels it plays a central and quite significant role in his practice. He uses it as a touchstone for reflection on past practice. He also refers to his vision to direct his decisions about what to teach, how to build his students' understandings, and even what role he plays in his school as a whole. Despite the considerable distance between his vision and his practice, Carlos feels inspired by his vision and feels fulfilled and satisfied in his work.

Yet for those who find the distance seems too far, the experience of comparing vision against practice can prompt feelings of discouragement and despair. In this case, reflecting on past practice and comparing it to a vision leads teachers to feel discouraged and depressed. They seek reasons to explain their disappointing assessment, at times blaming themselves, the school, or perhaps worse, their students and the communities in which they teach. These teachers learn to discount their visions, doubt themselves and question their students' capacities. For instance, Andrea, a student-teacher of English, observes,

> I used to think about it [my vision] a lot...But I think...it's not realistic for me to sort of hold on to this as much as I used to....Whereas it was...in the front of my mind for a long time, now it's sort of tucked away in the back. It's still there but it doesn't dominate my thoughts as much as it used to (Andrea, initial interview, lines 166-173).

In fact, despite expressing a very ambitious and hopeful vision, after her first year of teaching Andrea has tempered her hopes, wondering if her vision can be achieved and, if not, whether she should leave her school or teaching altogether. Indeed, the way teachers feel about their work—whether motivated and inspired or deflated and discouraged—depends upon a complex relationship between their vision, their current practice and their institutional context. In particular, examining the focus, range and distance of teachers' visions provides a means of understanding the way teachers feel about their teaching, their students and their school; the changes they make or don't make in their classrooms; and even the decisions they make regarding their futures as teachers. While teachers' visions varied along each of the three dimensions and context, a closer look reveals four consistent patterns or "constellations" that revolve around the distance from practice and the degree of clarity of the visions. Each one of these constellations was associated with a particular variation on the role of vision in teachers' lives.

By looking at these constellations, we can begin to appreciate why someone like Carlos might look forward to sustaining his commitment to teaching over a number of years, be inspired to continue to reflect on his practice, and even spend long hours after school and on the weekends with students needing extra help. At the same time, these constellations help us to recognize why a teacher like Andrea might become dispirited

and deflated and might struggle with questions about whether she is a poor teacher or her students are poor learners.

Looking at the Constellations

"Close-Clear" Constellation

Table 1 "Close-Clear" Constellation

Focus	Range	Distance	Context
Clear	*Narrow*	*Close*	*Supportive or neutral*

Table 1 shows the first constellation that emerged from the data, visions that are clearly and narrowly focused, fairly close to practice, and in a supportive or indifferent context. Table 2 shows that three teachers from this study reflect this cluster of attributes; Patricia, Gary and Sandy. Patricia and Gary are both recent college graduates, and graduates of Raleigh University Teacher Education program. Sandy is an experienced teacher of seven years and is also a graduate of the Raleigh Teacher Education program. Patricia and Sandy both teach science; and Gary teaches government and social studies.

Table 2 Teachers in "Close-Clear" Constellation

Name	Subject Matter	Yrs. Experience	Program
Patricia	Science	1	Raleigh
Gary	Economics	1	Raleigh
Sandy	Science	7	Raleigh

All three of these teachers described visions that were sharply focused. For instance, Gary's vision of his economics classroom was quite clear, well-elaborated and articulated. He could explain in detail what he envisioned himself and his students doing and provided vivid examples. He also articulately described a focus upon decision-making and problem-solving, again with a number of supporting examples. Gary mentioned this focus frequently, describing it in detail in his vision statement as well as in both interviews. He also talked in depth about how decision-making was central to his discipline and why he himself believed it was important. Patricia's vision of small, communal education was similarly clearly articulated. She described images of what her curriculum would look like in this ideal classroom and what sorts of skills and habits her students would develop. In addition, she constantly returned to her particular focus—the development of inquiry skills—mentioning it on numerous occasions during our interviews. She was quite explicit about why she felt the methods of inquiry were important for her students to develop now as well as in later life. Sandy's vision, of a classroom of students conducting scientific research and exploring scientific concepts, was similarly clear.

These three teachers all felt quite optimistic about attaining their visions; and all felt that their visions were relatively close to practice although most suggested there was at least some gap between their vision and their everyday practice. Sandy felt the closest to her vision, reflecting that the past academic year (that had just completed prior to our interview in June) had been surprisingly similar to her vision. She observed, "This year was more like one hundred percent...This year...worked out pretty well and...so it's pretty close to that [vision]" (initial, line 26-30). Gary, while he felt that his vision was somewhat more distant, maintained that he experienced moments when he was able to live his vision; "[In] my econ class there are times when I'll feel like I'll get close to where I would like the class to be. There are times when I can step back and watch the kids work" (initial, line 27). Patricia felt that her school context in particular allowed her to feel as if she were approaching her vision. When I first interviewed her, she was particularly optimistic about attaining her vision and remarked, "In terms of what I wrote [in my vision statement], a lot of that has been influenced by the fact that I already know that IS what I am going to do" (initial, line 291).

Teachers in this constellation maintain that their vision plays a significant and positive role in their lives. The clarity of focus enables these teachers to use their visions to constantly guide, measure and assess their classroom practice. As Sandy remarked, her vision guides the "whole structure of the classroom," (initial, line 337) from physical organization to curriculum. "I think about it in all my lesson plans. It's sort of how I operate. 'How would Sandy teach a lesson?' 'How would Sandy present this'? (initial, lines 292-311). The high degree of articulation in her vision enables Sandy to constantly tune her own practice against her vision. Similarly, Gary explained that because he has a clear image of "where to go" he can purposefully develop appropriate curriculum;

> If I know where I want the kids to go, then it's easier for me to structure my class to get them there. I can think about...what topics I need to cover, how ... I want to cover it, and what's the most effective way for me to help them learn and get to this point. So it [vision] just ... helps clarify everything (initial, lines 337-340).

Gary gave a specific example of how his vision helps direct his work,

> So if I'm trying to decide what to do today, I [consider] what's the next step to get from here, from A to B, where are we at in that progress and what's the best way for them to get there. If you don't have that end point, it's really tough. You're just meandering around" (initial, lines 341-344).

Patricia spoke of using her vision as an assessment of her current practice, and also in sustaining her commitment to teaching; "Its role is to first of all make me question what I'm doing. Is it really what I want to be doing? Is it [a] worthwhile use of my time? And then to keep me going" (follow-up, lines 406-410). Indeed, teachers in this constellation seem to find the experience of comparing practice to vision extremely motivating. Gary, Sandy and Patricia all described feeling motivated to learn more about how to attain their visions. Their pursuit of new means of approaching their visions leads to new learning, in turn, fueling their motivation and initiating the cycle again. As Patricia explained, "I'm learning so much about how to get further that it helps keep me going" (initial, line 398). Gary described feeling charged by the opportunity to reflect upon his curriculum and felt that his vision motivated him to constantly "notice" new things and make changes in his practice. He said with excitement; "..next year I'll

probably notice something else. 'Ohhh—I need to do this' or, 'I need to do that'...but still I think my underlying goal of getting kids to think more, to come up with their own solutions, I think that's going to be a constant" (follow-up, line 562-563). While Sandy explained that her vision prompted her to experiment with new ideas, such as teaching students to square dance to help them understand molecular motion, she admitted a certain amount of anxiety accompanied such attempts. She commented, "There's definitely a lot of risk in the teaching that I do. [But] the first time ... you come up with some bizarre idea [and you try it]. When I first did that, that was sort of like the breakthrough" (initial, line 353-357). Yet Sandy also described the exhilaration she felt when her classroom seemed to reflect her vision; "It's very fulfilling. Part of you wants to run around and scream [about] how excited you are and tell everybody and just brag and boast" (initial, line 235-237). These teachers seem to benefit from a positive cycle of comparison, motivation, experimentation and learning, and fulfillment.

In addition to the motivation and learning initiated by the clarity of their visions and the reasonable gap between vision and reality, these teachers used their vision to guide their selection of school contexts. For instance, Gary chose to teach at a public high school in eastern California, because he felt that they had a vision, and that it was reflective in part, of his own vision. "My new school, the one where I just got hired...they have a vision,... a school vision, which is one of the reasons I accepted the job there," he explained (initial, line 83). Patricia elected to teach at an alternative community-based independent school, because she felt that her vision was shaped by her earlier experience at that school as a teacher's aide. She felt that she could attain her vision at this type of school. Sandy is the only teacher in this cluster who did not use her vision to select her school, and in fact, she felt her context was indifferent to her vision. "I don't see any vision on their part, and their method of support is non-interference. And that's the best you can hope," she observed (initial, line 61-62).

In sum, the clarity of these teachers' visions enables them to use their visions as a guide and a prompt for productive analysis of practice. As Senge (1990) has observed, the juxtaposition between vision and current reality can lead to a sense of "creative tension" that may inspire and motivate people to learn new ways to navigate the gap. While the gap between vision and practice may be smaller for the teachers in this

constellation, that gap and the clarity of their visions seems to contribute to a powerful experience of creative tension. Hence, vision leads to fruitful analysis of practice, in turn leading to learning and increased feelings of excitement and agency as these teachers continue to advance on their visions.

"Close-Cloudy" Constellation

Table 3 "Close-Cloudy" Constellation

Focus	Range	Distance	Context
Fuzzy	*Narrow*	*Close*	*Supportive*

Table 3 shows the second constellation that emerged from the data; visions that have a fuzzy and narrow focus, are quite close to practice, and in supportive contexts. In these cases, vision seems to play a minimal role in teachers' lives. Table 4 shows that four teachers in this study reflect this constellation: Daria, Nel, Paul and David. The four teachers teach mathematics, history, science and mathematics, and English respectively. All but Paul are experienced teachers at the high school level. Daria and Nel, in fact, were the most veteran teachers in this study, Daria with eighteen and Nel with fifteen years of experience.

Table 4 Teachers in "Close-Cloudy" Constellation

Name	Subject Matter	Yrs. Experience	Program
Daria	Mathematics	18	Raleigh
Nel	History	15	Raleigh
Paul	Math/Physics	1	Mayfield
David	English	6	Raleigh

Teachers in this constellation did not describe their visions with the same degree of clarity as teachers in the previous constellation. In contrast to teachers in other

constellations who had clearer visions, teachers in the "Close-Cloudy" constellation did not offer multiple examples or elaboration of their visions. In addition, while teachers in other constellations returned again and again to certain aspects of their visions, describing them as particularly significant or central to their visions, teachers in this constellation did not indicate a particular center of attention. For instance, over the course of his interview, David emphasized a number of areas in connection with his vision. He talked at various times about the importance of peer editing; connecting his subject matter to other disciplines in the school; helping all students succeed in his classroom and trying to adapt his curriculum to varying ability levels. While other teachers in this study tended to return again and again to one particular focus, usually also explaining why it was important to them, David did not constantly return to any one of these areas. He did not emphasize any one of these aspects of his vision as being more important than another area, nor did he explain why they were important to his vision. Daria, Paul, and Nel similarly did not emphasize any one aspect of their vision as being particularly important to them.

These teachers also said that they already feel that their practice is extremely close to their visions. Nel described her practice as "almost identical" to her vision, adding, "most of it, I feel, is going on in my practice right now" (fieldnotes). David observed, "I don't have a problem with finding my vision or attaining my vision for the most part with my students" (initial, line 120). Paul emphasized, with a note penned at the bottom of his vision statement, "I feel very fortunate that I'm in a position where I am actually able to live much of this vision right now" (vision statement). Daria remarked, "I think my classroom…is pretty close to the ideal" (followup, line 102).

Yet when asked about the role vision played in their lives, these teachers offered vague examples, talked about other teachers, or described vision as something that worked mostly in their "unconscious." Daria spoke the least about the role of vision. When asked about its role in her life, she instead spoke about the role she felt it played in general for teachers, and talked about its role in motivating other teachers at her school. While Paul remarked that he thinks about his vision "probably several times a week" he did not provide examples of how it shaped his curriculum, or helped him reflect upon his practice. When asked to illustrate the role vision played for him, he explained that he was

currently thinking about how best to maximize his time at the end of the year with his students but he did not describe how his vision related to those efforts.

In addition, these teachers were quite vague about the steps they were taking to approach their visions. David, for instance, had trouble comparing his vision to his current classroom. When asked what he was working on in his current classroom in order to get closer to his vision, he seemed to struggle with his response;

> I think I need to be more consciously aware of ways in which I make more connections to students' lives. I think I have a pretty good atmosphere set up in my classroom though it's something at the beginning of the year you need to make sure that you set up and I think in one classroom this year it didn't work too well. I don't know. I don't know what to say (initial, line 195-197).

Nel and David both described their visions as tacit or inchoate influences upon their practice. Nel explained that it played what she called an "intuitive" role (fieldnotes) and that her vision was "instinctual" (fieldnotes) rather than overtly active in her thinking. She explained that she tended to fight for what she believed in, and suggested that her vision was part of how she defined what she believed in, but did not describe vision as playing a particular role in those efforts. Of all the teachers in this constellation, David talked the most about the role of his vision. He comments that it is not an entirely "conscious thing";

> I don't think it's a conscious thing but…it basically comes down to what's working and how is it working, or what's not working and how can I change it so that it does work? So when things work for me, I'm hitting the ideas and the vision I want to achieve. So that recognition is where I see my vision and recognizing what I'm doing well and what I'm not doing well (initial, lines 166-168).

Indeed, David explained that he didn't actively think of his vision in planning, "I don't [think to myself], 'Okay, well, this is what I need, this is the vision and this is where I want to go.' But instead, it's 'Okay, these are the things I'm using and… what's working?'" (initial, line 188-189).

All four of these teachers teach in what they describe as particularly supportive contexts. Nel and Paul both teach in private schools, and both noted in their interviews

that they their schools reflected their visions for the most part. Paul, for instance, explained that the parochial school where he works has a clearly articulated vision[2] quite consistent with his vision's emphasis upon personal as well as intellectual growth. David, while not in an independent school, teaches in a suburban school in one of the highest-income neighborhoods in his region. He explains that the students in the school make it particularly easy to get close to his vision. Daria also teaches in public school, but she feels her context is not unsupportive of her vision, and feels her vision is extremely close to her practice.

For teachers in this constellation, vision does not seem to play an explicit role. It does not guide their planning, nor does it motivate them to reflect upon their practice, invite them to analyze their curriculum, or prompt them to learn new approaches or methods of teaching.

"Distant-Clear" Constellation

Table 5 "Distant-Clear" Constellation

Focus	Range	Distance	Context
Clear	*Narrow*	*Distant*	*Not supportive or neutral*

Table 5 shows the third constellation that emerged from the data—visions that have a clear and narrow focus, are quite distant from practice, and are in a context that is indifferent at best, or at worst, inimical.

Table 6 Teachers in "Distant-Clear" Constellation

Name	Subject Matter	Yrs. Experience	Program
Andrea	English	1	Mayfield
Nina	Science	1	Mayfield

Sarah	English	1	Mayfield
Lily	Mathematics	1	Raleigh
Jim	English/History	4	Raleigh
Susan	English	1	Raleigh

Table 6 shows that five teachers from this study seem to fall broadly into this constellation; Andrea, Nina, Sarah, Susan, Jim and Lily. Three of these teachers are relatively new to the profession. Andrea, Susan and Lily are both recent graduates of Raleigh University Teacher Education program. Sarah, Jim and Nina all had some previous teaching experience. Sarah taught English for five years in Spain; and Nina taught science for two years in another state before both attended Mayfield State. Jim had been teaching for four years after graduating from Raleigh when this study began. The teachers represent four disciplines; Andrea, Sarah and Susan all teach English; Jim teaches English and history; Nina teaches science; and Lily teaches mathematics. Most of these teachers felt that their contexts were particularly unsupportive, while several of them termed them as simply indifferent.

Teachers in this cluster feel that the gap between their vision and their practice is overwhelmingly vast. For teachers in this cluster, a distant vision undermines their motivation and depresses and discourages them. Rather than inviting the sense of "creative tension" that energized teachers like Patricia or Gary, vision simply surfaces tensions. Lily, for instance, described a "huge disconnect" between her vision and her current teaching (follow-up, line 124). She explained that when she compared her teaching to her vision, she felt the contrast "was so depressing that I decided it was much better just to … work all the time and not think about it" (follow-up, line 170). She added,

> Because if I stop and think about it, I'm satisfied with pieces of my teaching but there's so much more that I should and could be doing…I guess that my vision reflects what I think my teaching should be and how kids learn. And I'm not there which means I'm not doing everything I can to help the kids learn (follow-up, line 174).

While these teachers said vision played a minimal role in their lives, they still talked extensively about their visions. In fact, their discussions suggest their visions actually play a substantial negative role, by depressing and leading them to question and doubt their hopes and expectations. Even worse, these teachers seem to be learning to distrust what they imagine and to consider their dreams to be impossible illusions. During a follow-up interview, for example, Lily referred to her vision disparagingly as "dreamland" and "an uneducated ideal" (follow-up, line 258). Only nine months into teaching high school, Sarah explained that in her current circumstances at her school she felt as if her hopes had been so badly dashed that she described her vision as "trashed" (initial, line 400). She observed, "Your ideas get so far away from what you are dealing with every day that you end up distrusting what you visualize" (initial, line 23). Susan said simply, "[O]n an emotional level it's really difficult to keep going" (follow-up, line 267).

Lily said she had come to learn not to expect as much as she had hoped; "I think I'm still moving towards it [my vision] but I don't set it as a requirement..... I also learned to lower my expectations in the first month of my teaching" (follow-up, lines 204-207). It is important to emphasize that she says that this shift occurred in the "first month" of teaching. Lily had barely begun to teach before her ideals began to crumble and she was already expecting less of herself and her students.

Jim says he has developed what he calls a "sub-vision" (follow-up, line 216). He explains that if he can't attain his vision of his English-as-a-second-language students graduating, he works towards what he thinks is the acceptable next best thing to his vision:

> You have to think about [what happens] if they don't graduate? What are they going to learn? Are they better people? Are they more educated people? More prepared for this world than if they haven't come to school? So that's kind of a 'sub-vision' if the first one can't be reached. I'm trying to think about how can I best prepare them for working or even go back to Mexico or whatever (follow-up, lines 212-217)

Sarah explained that the vast gap between her vision and her reality prompted her to "hate" her teacher education classes, to feel jealous of her colleagues, and to feel

profound discouragement about her teaching context. Vision served not as an inspiration, but as a glaring reminder of how impossible "possibilities" were for her;

> When I think of possibilities, it's when I go to Mayfield State. I hate it, sometimes. I go to this Wednesday methods class. [People say things like] "this is a good poetry technique", "We do this…", or, "In my class I did a whole unit on poetry, combined with…."….I would get out of there and I would feel so depressed. I would feel a combination of envy and such disappointment…in myself. It's very hard to figure out what's you and what's your environment (initial, line 410-418).

In fact, only nine months into teaching high school, Sarah no longer believed her vision was possible;

> I like to overcome obstacles, but this one I cannot overcome. I give up. I mean I will maintain the line, the status quo, but whatever illusions… teachers have of helping or changing or affecting students' lives, give it up. There's no way, it's physically impossible to do it (initial, lines 127-130).

The apparent impossibility of their visions leads these teachers to ask themselves difficult questions. Is it my teaching—is it me? Is it my students? Is it my school? Is it this community? In attempting to answer these questions, teachers in this constellation may come to reinforce their stereotypical images of students (even images that some may consider racist), of certain schools, or even particular communities. Indeed, teachers who entered the profession without stereotypical images of youth may even learn to expect less from their students. Teachers in this constellation may likely be the most at risk for leaving the profession. In fact, two teachers, Andrea and Susan, told me that they were already considering leaving teaching and they were both only first-year teachers. Furthermore, these teachers are at risk for not only leaving with dashed hopes, but also for wrestling with discomforting and disquieting feelings of lowered expectations for students, schools and themselves.

"Far-Clear" Constellation

Table 7 "Far-Clear" Constellation

Focus	Range	Distance	Context
Clear	*Broad*	*Far*	*Supportive*

Table 7 shows the fourth constellation that emerged from the data, visions that have a clear and broad focus, are far from practice, and are in a supportive context. Table 8 shows that Jake, Carlos and Kelly all have visions that reflect this constellation. These teachers range in levels of experience; Jake has taught history for seven years; Kelly has taught science for four, and Carlos is a student-teacher of history. All three are graduates of the Raleigh program, and are in contexts that they feel are supportive of their visions.

Table 8 Teachers in "Far-Clear" Constellation

Name	Subject Matter	Yrs. Experience	Program
Kelly	Science	4	Raleigh
Jake	History	7	Raleigh
Carlos	History	1	Raleigh

For all three of these teachers, vision seems quite far from practice. Jake explained, "I'm certainly not here yet" (initial, line 36). Kelly observed that her vision of students developing independent thinking skills was still quite distant, "We're still very far away from students owning their own education" (initial, line 41). Carlos remarked that his goal for Latino youth becoming more academically successful may take years. He reflected, "maybe later on when they have kids they'll understand those issues and maybe they'll be better at helping their students do better…I think maybe it will take a couple of generations for that to happen" (post-observation reflection).

Despite the considerable distance, vision remains a significant measure and guide. As Jake explains, "I realize that this may never be achieved, but I try to think constantly about what it would look like and measure it, use that as a measuring stick consistently

and say, 'OK, this is where I need…'." (initial, line 53). Specifically, Jake commented that his vision directs his planning,

> …there's no question that this is in the front of my mind all the time. When you have time to sit down and think, "OK, what's this next unit going to be like? What are we going to do this year? How are we going to coordinate with the English department? They're reading Night. We're doing World War II. How are we going to facilitate their learning?" That sort of stuff. [I'm] always thinking about this (initial, lines 40-43).

Jake says that his vision also helps him evaluate his current practice; it enables him to identify what he could do differently in his classroom and direct changes he needs to make in his practice or curriculum. Jake comments that his vision prompts reflection at different levels in his thinking, from long-term curriculum planning to daily classroom events. "I guess you think about it on different levels," he explains. For instance, on a daily basis, he compares what happens in his classroom to what he envisions happening.

> You think about it every day when you go in the classroom and you kind of go, "Whew, what was THAT? What am I doing here?" Or that went very well, why don't I do that more often?" So I think for me, it's just a constant check (initial, lines 260-261).

Both Jake and Kelly refer to the importance of elaborating steps towards one's vision as part of enabling them to recognize and enjoy a sense that they are making progress towards it. Kelly, for instance, talks about having developed particular plans that she and her colleagues will enact to get closer to her vision. Kelly and her colleagues envision that students in their school will become "independent thinkers"—able to ask good questions that are of deep personal interest, research appropriately, reflect and critique what they are learning, and come up with thoughtful, and possible responses. She and her colleagues thus devised a plan to support the development of such independent thinking in students that involved focusing on different "levels" of thinking for students. They had identified what they called an "inquiry level," for younger students, in which students would learn how to approach problems, pose good questions and reflect on their work (essentially, learn meta-cognitive skills). Then they had identified a "self-initiating"

level at which students would be able to identify areas of interest to them and pursue them somewhat independently:

> So one idea,...speaking in more concrete terms, is that we would have three levels. Something which we would call it like an "inquiry level" designed for students to, I mean we would still naturally be teaching content only the process....But in addition to that there would be a focus on acclimating the student to the school's ... philosophies....So they would become more familiar with the habits of lifelong learning which are a series of questions and habits that we have identified as important for an independent critical thinker (follow-up, lines 62-66).

Indeed, the clarity of Kelly's focus includes not only what students are doing and what she is doing in her ideal classroom, but also a pathway that she and her colleagues can take in order to get closer to her vision. Kelly and her peers in this constellation explicitly use their visions as guides for planning curriculum as well as a means of assessing past and future practice. The considerable articulation of their visions enables them to constantly test and tune their practice against a clear, elaborated template as well as to map out future directions and avenues towards their visions.

Thus, even though the reach is substantial, these three teachers are deeply driven by their visions. They feel capable and powerful. Vision invites them to reflect and analyze past curriculum, shapes plans for the future, and encourages them to continue to refine and revise their work. The juxtaposition between vision and practice that so discomforted teachers in the "Distant-Clear" constellation serves to excite and charge these teachers.[3] Furthermore, all three of these teachers selected their schools purposefully, as contexts in which they felt they might be better able to attain their visions. Kelly, for instance, consulted her vision statement before interviewing with her current school, a school which she described in follow-up interviews as "the right place," observing, "I'm in the right school for this [vision]" (follow-up, line 156-157). Carlos maintained that he had always wanted to work in a community like his own, "my goal has always been...to work in a similar community to Sandhill...with the Latino community" (initial, line 17). In fact, Carlos insisted that he conduct his practicum at his former high school, despite the concerns of faculty in his teacher education program about such an arrangement.

Implications and Conclusion

Looking at teachers' vision suggests a number of implications for teachers' learning and motivation that may be useful for teacher education and professional development. In particular, this study helps us understand more about what may contribute to teachers' fulfillment, joy and satisfaction in their work as well as what can contribute to feelings of discouragement or deflation. It helps us recognize what shapes teachers' decisions to remain in the profession or to leave teaching. Finally, it points to some means of helping sustain teachers' commitments and motivations assisting them to weigh in on the more positive emotions of teaching.

For instance, a number of studies indicate that between thirty to fifty percent of beginning teachers will leave teaching within the first five years (Grissmer & Kirby, 1987). Scholars and teacher educators have frequently pointed to prospective teachers' experience of "reality shock" as a potential contributor to beginning teachers leaving teaching with such frequency (Veenman, 1984). Yet this study's examination of teachers in the "Distant-Clear" constellation helps us understand that reality shock may result not only from learning about the bureaucratic nature of schools, the isolation of the profession, and the ambiguous nature of teaching that many have documented, but from the gap between vision and current reality. Furthermore, this study of vision reveals that disillusionment may result in far more than deflated emotions and the disturbing attitude shift from progressive to conservative documented by researchers. The gap between vision and reality can in fact lead teachers to learn that their visions are impossible and that they and their students are incapable of attaining them. For instance, for the teachers in the "Distant-Clear" constellation, we saw how a clear, distant vision in an unsupportive context had drastic consequences not only for teachers' emotional lives but also for what the teachers learned. Teachers in the "Distant-Clear" constellation—poised at the very beginning of their careers—had learned to lower their expectations, to doubt their own capacities, and those of their students and, as Lily put it, that their visions were "uneducated ideals."

How might teacher educators help teachers not only to learn to be thoughtful, reflective, effective practitioners but also to protect themselves from burnout, disillusionment, and attrition? Darling-Hammond (1994) observes that a number of studies suggest that the most powerful way to predict teachers' sustained commitment to teaching is a "sense of efficacy—the teachers' sense that he or she is making a positive difference in the lives of students" (p.9). This dissertation suggests that learning to navigate the gap between vision and practice maybe especially helpful in enabling teachers to develop that sense of efficacy to which Darling-Hammond refers. In particular, as the constellations illustrated, teachers who had considerably elaborated the activities and actions they needed to undertake described strong feelings of agency with regards to their ability to gradually approach their visions. If teacher educators assist teachers to identify and clarify the practices that will help advance towards the visions, such pathways may help foster or contribute to teachers' sense of "creative tension." Recognizing and elaborating steps towards one's vision may help teachers sustain their motivations to continue to pursue their visions, and in turn, insulate them from becoming discouraged by the distance between vision and everyday practice.

Teacher educators may also be particularly helpful in assisting student-teachers to consider what one teachers in the "Far-Clear" constellation called "the bigger picture"; the contextual supports of vision. With an understanding of the powerful relationship between vision and context, teacher educators may be able to help student-teachers identify field placements that may provide an appropriate "reach" for their visions. Such an understanding might also allow more student-teachers to be able to navigate the professional work field and find schools that matched their visions in the ways that Jake, Carlos, Patricia, Gary and Kelly did. Or, teacher educators may at least be able to help teachers avoid the potentially debilitating mismatches that led teachers like Andrea and Susan to consider leaving the profession. This is not to suggest that it is not appropriate or healthy to teach in contexts that prompt interrogations of visions and even challenge them. Such experiences may be particularly powerful for student-teachers, given that they are provided ample opportunity for reflection and thoughtfully supported in their efforts and inquiries. Nonetheless, it is also clear that substantial conflicts can result in drastic

consequences not only for a teacher's dreams and for her career as a teacher, but also for her learning and that of her students.

Finally, teachers' vision allows us to see that teachers' lives and work are fed by emotion no less than by cognition. As such, they reinforce the challenge to the traditional separation between cognition and emotion that has been pursued by a number of researchers and scholars (Damasio, 1994; LeDoux, 1996; Scheffler, 1991). Damasio, for example, challenges the longstanding assumption that emotions are "irrational" and lead people astray from logical thinking. He argues that "emotions and feelings may not be intruders in the bastion of reason at all: they may be enmeshed in its networks for worse and for better" (1994, p.xii). In fact, Damasio suggests that the absence of emotions may be just as damaging to one's reasoning, and could be just as culpable in compromising our decision-making.

Scheffler (1991) has been exploring the same issue. In particular, he argues that in addition to its accepted role as a source of new ideas, emotion helps one select, refine, define and develop ideas. Emotion, he suggests, helps us focus upon what we find exciting or intriguing, and directs our theorizing, contributing enormously to the process of problem-solving. In fact, these scholars suggest that our futures are just as dependent upon our emotions and feelings as they are upon cognition. As Damasio explains, "Emotion and feeling, along with all the covert physiological machinery underlying them, assist us with the daunting task of predicting an uncertain future and planning our actions accordingly" (1994, p.xiii).

Teachers with visions that represent their hopes and dreams do not act or think irrationally as a result of them. In fact, it is quite the opposite. Vision works in much the same way as Scheffler argues; it focuses teachers' passions, guides their energies and commitments, prompts selection of particular directions, and initiates and supports decision-making. For instance, in Carlos' vision, we can see an emotional commitment to a goal that will not be realized, even at the earliest, until his ninth-graders graduate from high school. Yet his vision directs and tempers his emotions, by allowing him to remain faithful to a long-term goal without deluding himself as to the difficulty of obtaining it. In fact, his vision allows him to plan on a day-to-day basis for an eventual reality for which he dreams, as well as to deal with the fact that such a reality may never come into

existence. Similarly, we can appreciate how, for teachers like Jake and Kelly, vision provides a means of organizing and directing one's emotions. For Kelly, vision is not simply an island in the future, self-contained and unapproachable. Rather, her vision encompasses not only the outcomes she imagines but also a very specific and very concrete path that may enable her to reach her vision. Vision represents her hopes and dreams even as it allows her to make selections, choices and determine directions. Vision allows these teachers in the "Far-Clear" constellation to remain fulfilled and inspired, despite the distance of their visions. For teachers in the "Distant-Clear" constellation, one might argue that their distress interferes with decision-making and problem-solving. Yet when their hopes and passions are challenged (though they are understandably deflated and discouraged), they rationally revise their expectations. They may not be happy with those adjustments or with changing their beliefs about students and practice, but one could argue that they are "making sense" of their situations. These rational choices infused with emotion, and these passionate commitments fueled by rational planning for the future—to play upon the old saying—this is the stuff of which teaching and learning is made.

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Appendix A

Table 9. Background Information of Sixteen Teacher-Participants

Name	Yrs. Experience	Subject Matter	Program
Paul	1	Math/physics	Mayfield
Andrea	1	English	Mayfield
Nina	1	Science	Mayfield
Sarah	1	English	Mayfield
Susan	1	English	Raleigh
Lily	1	Mathematics	Raleigh
Carlos	1	History	Raleigh
Gary	1	Economics	Raleigh
Patricia	1	Science	Raleigh
Kelly	4	Science	Raleigh
Jim	4	English/Hist.	Raleigh
David	6	English	Raleigh
Jake	7	History	Raleigh
Sandy	7	Science	Raleigh
Nel	15	History	Raleigh
Daria	18	Mathematics	Raleigh

[1] The research reported in this paper comes from a two-year study of teachers' vision, and is more fully examined in a dissertation to be submitted to Stanford University called "Seeing Through Teachers' Eyes: An Exploration of the Content, Character and Role of Teachers' Visions."

[2] In fact, Paul's school prints their Vision Statement on the front page of their monthly newsletter, which reads,

> Students of St. Anne High School will possess the knowledge, skills, and Christian values they need to achieve fulfilling personal lives and careers. They will be prepared to exercise leadership roles in their adult lives and foster democratic principles and Christian values of social justice in a diverse and technologically changing society.

[3] These issues are explored in more depth in narrative portraits of Jake and Kelly, Chapters Five and Seven in my dissertation (Hammerness, 1999).

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